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ABSTRACT

The school dropout rate is a problem which educators cannot solve alone. It will take a total societal effort to design solutions. This document presents the ideas and strategies discussed at a conference on dropout prevention attended by leaders of national education organizations. Theoretical as well as practical suggestions are given to begin the process of mobilizing the community to combat the dropout rate. Components of this process are the following: (1) mobilizing the individual; (2) mobilizing the coalitions; (3) mobilizing the public; (4) mobilizing the agencies; (5) acting on the vision; and (6) sustaining the effort over the long run. Advice and checklists are provided for each of these steps. (VM)

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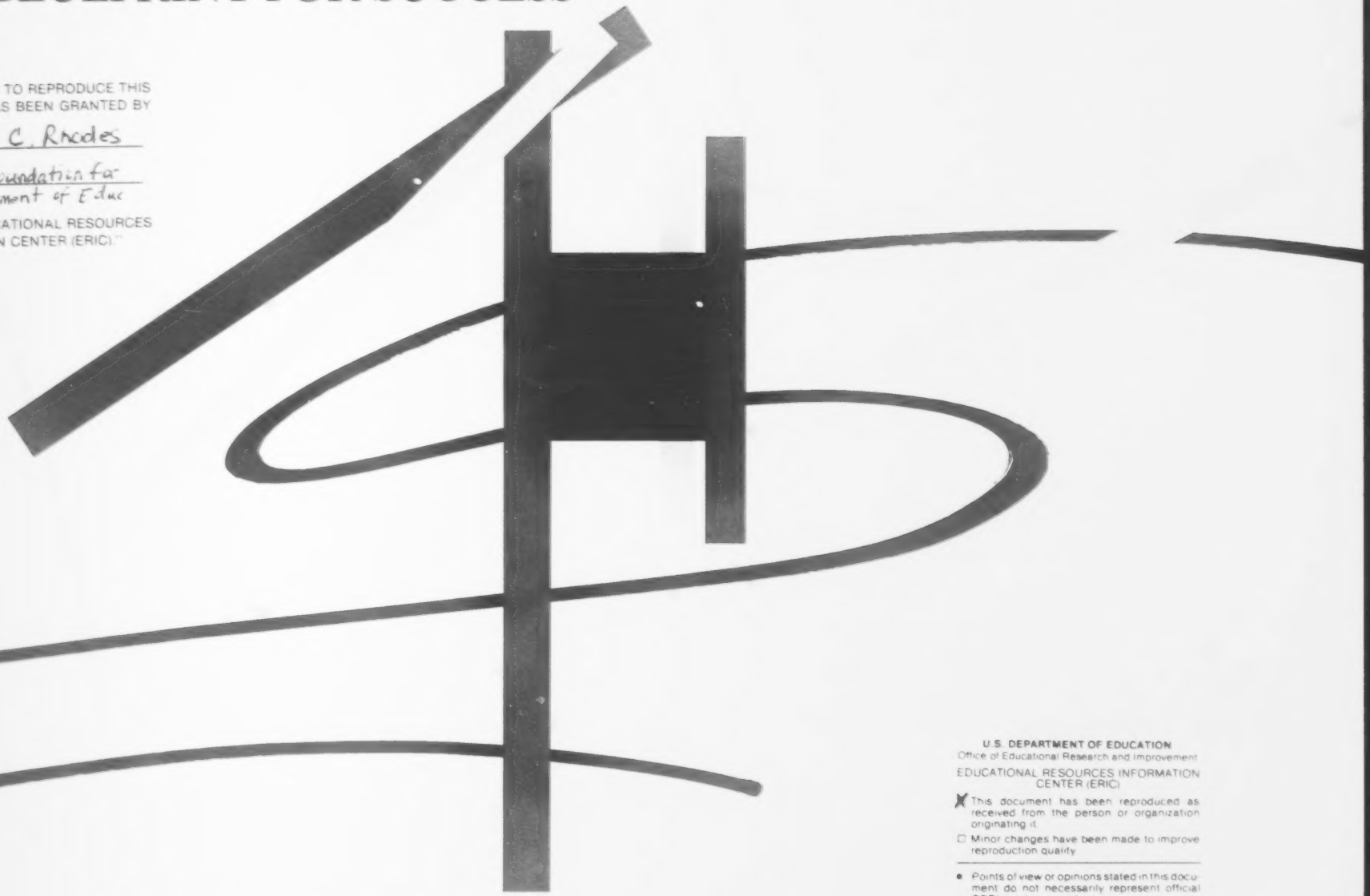
A BLUEPRINT FOR SUCCESS



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NATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF EDUCATION

1987

COLLABORATING WITH NFIE FOR MOBILIZATION AROUND DROPOUT PREVENTION

NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

American Association of Community and Junior Colleges
American Association for Counseling and Development
American Association of School Administrators
ASPIRA of America, Inc.
Carnegie Corporation of New York
Charles Stewart Mott Foundation
Committee for Economic Development
Council for Educational Development and Research
Council of Chief State School Officers
Council of Great City Schools
Education Commission of the States
Institute for Educational Leadership, Inc.
Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund
Mothers Against Drunk Driving
National Alliance of Business
National Association of Elementary School Principals
National Association of Social Workers
National Association of State Boards of Education
National Conference of State Legislatures
National Congress of Parents and Teachers (National PTA)
National Education Association
National Governors' Association
National Urban League, Inc.
National Urban Coalition
Rainbow Coalition
The Ford Foundation
The Johnson Foundation
United States Chamber of Commerce

REGIONAL, STATE AND LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS

Austin Chamber of Commerce
Chemical Bank of New York
Edgewood School District
Garden Grove Unified School District
Greater Hartford Chamber of Commerce
Lockheed - Austin Division
Los Angeles Educational Partnership
Massachusetts Governor's Office
Mississippi Action for Community Education
Racine Unified School District
Rochester City School District
San Antonio Mayor's Office
San Francisco Unified School District
South Carolina Employment Initiatives for Youth
Thomas J. Quirk Middle School
Time Inc.
Tucson Unified School District #1
University of Wisconsin
Urban League of Rochester
Wisconsin Public Interest Research Group

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DRAWING A BLUEPRINT FOR COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION

Altering the conditions of society which have resulted in large numbers of our population dropping out of our educational system is a long, complex, and arduous journey and is impossible if we try to do it alone. It takes a total society effort to combat a total societal problem. Educators cannot be held responsible for solving a problem for which they have only part of the solution. It is time to rally the populace to be outraged enough to respond to the human cry of the wasted potential of our citizenry.

As president of the National Education Association, Mary Hatwood Futrell challenged teachers to step forward and demonstrate to the country their commitment to educating all of America. With one voice, 8,000 teachers rose to demonstrate this commitment by pledging their own money to a major dropout prevention effort—Operation Rescue.

The National Foundation for the Improvement of Education, in administering the NEA initiative, designed a grants program for locally defined problems with locally designed solutions. Simultaneously, NFIE urged other national organizations to join in discovering the essential ingredients for successful dropout prevention programs.

Four regional information exchanges were held with representatives from national and local organizations to listen to successful components of dropout prevention programs, effective strategies to overcome barriers, and lessons learned from experience that would be helpful to others in developing new programs. *A Blueprint for Success* set forth the key principles and elements of these exchanges.

The major finding was that all successful programs share a common practice of mobilizing leaders to take responsibility for attacking the dropout problem in their communities.

It was clear to the national organization representatives that they needed a starting point and strategies to help their constituencies support local communities in mobilizing around dropout prevention.

To that end, NFIE invited national organization representatives to engage with experienced mobilizers of social, political, environmental, and educational issues at a conference held at the Johnson Foundation Wingspread Conference Center, Spring of 1987.

A Blueprint for Success: Community Mobilization for Dropout Prevention tries to capture the ideas, strategies, attitudes, cautions, outrage, and challenge of the crisis as it was discussed at the Wingspread Conference. The publication is an attempt to provide theoretical as well as practical suggestions about how to begin, how to proceed, and with whom to work.

It is a call to action, a challenge to use the things we learned.

It asks that each one of us take part, assume responsibility, becomes leaders in the offensive.

It reminds us that there are others out there who are also eager to act, who will work with us, and gives us ideas on how to get others involved.

It suggests ways to help bend and shape our institutions and agencies into more responsive and caring structures.

Each one of us must take on the challenge, must accept the seriousness of the crisis at hand. We can do something about the dropout problem. We can get others to join with us in moving from a point of outrage to a point of action. We have no choice.

Donna C. Rhodes

Donna C. Rhodes
Executive Director
National Foundation for the Improvement of Education

EDUCATION IS THE GUARDIAN OF DEMOCRACY

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."

Our country was founded on the principles of individual rights, personal freedoms, and participatory democracy. For two hundred years these principles have nurtured a nation that has come to be known throughout the world for its economic strength, its military power, and its promise of hope and opportunity for every individual.

Now we are facing a crisis that jeopardizes our long held democratic traditions and our strength as an economic superpower. The threat comes not from an outside aggressor but from within our nation itself.

Every year we are losing over one million children and young adults who turn their backs on the educational system and walk out the doors of their schools without completing their education.

In 1985, it was estimated that 29.4 percent of our nation's students who entered high school did not graduate. The problem is much worse in the inner cities where the rate exceeds 50 percent, and the percentage climbs still higher within certain minority groups. While the numbers differ slightly from study to study, they consistently show Native Americans as being hardest hit with dropout rates as high as 85 percent. Dropout rates for Hispanics range from 50 percent to 80 percent, for Blacks as high as 45 percent, and for Whites nearing 24 percent. Furthermore, dropout rates are disproportionately high for children from low-income families. The loss of so much of this human potential is creating an underclass that threatens the well-being of the whole nation.

The economic consequences of dropping out, for both our nation and the individuals involved, are staggering. Dropouts are more likely to be unemployed than their graduate counterparts, and when employed, they earn about one-third less. Dropouts are more likely to be the parents of the next generation's underclass, and they tend to be over-represented in our nation's prisons.

For example, in Texas, 91% of prison inmates are dropouts. It now costs $42,000 a year to house an inmate in a Texas state prison and $18,000 a year to maintain a teenager in a juvenile correctional facility. In contrast, the cost of educating a young person for one year in public schools in Texas is $6,000. The choice is clear: we can pay now, or up to seven times as much later.

Overall it has been estimated that the annual cost to American citizens to provide for dropouts and their families is more than $77 billion. This figure includes welfare and unemployment costs, lost tax revenue, and the costs of crime and crime prevention.

We live in a world of international competition. With each student we lose, our ability to compete is diminished. One million dropouts each year are crippling the economic viability of our nation in the world marketplace.

The strength and tranquility of our nation rest not only on economic opportunities and national defense capability, but, also, on the enhancement of the basic quality of life for individuals, families, and communities. We must strive to increase the citizenry's breadth and depth of understanding of society's mores.

To preserve our system of participatory democracy and fulfill its promise of individual rights and freedoms, we must have an educated citizenry. Failure to educate large portions of our population weakens the economic and social fabric of our society. We cannot afford this; neither our commitment to economic strength nor our sense of justice will allow it.

". . .to graduate is not just for the economy. . .it is for the civility, for the democracy, for the American community."
Edward J. Meade, Jr.
The Ford Foundation

"We must change our national attitude. Education is not a social program. Education is a national defense, a national security program. . .the key to domestic tranquility."
The Reverend Jesse L. Jackson
Rainbow Coalition

"If your aim is economic growth. . .reduce the number of dropouts and turn those tax-eaters into taxpayers."
James B. Hunt
Former Governor of North Carolina

"This is the struggle of our generation."
Terry Herndon
Board of Directors,
National Foundation for the Improvement of Education

NATIONAL CRISIS WITH LOCAL SOLUTIONS

Changing the nation's attitude about education and forcing confrontation on the dropout issue requires a mobilized and outraged citizenry. We can no longer afford to ignore the dropout problem; educational failure impacts the entire nation. Even those who have not previously been involved in educational issues must for now become involved.

Americans must be made to perceive the problem both in its national scope and in its effects on their own communities. We must provide accurate dropout data to the media and encourage community dropout impact studies. The facts themselves will incite outrage and motivate people to get involved.

We cannot look for national solutions. The dropout problem must be solved at the local level where the problems originate. This means mobilizing our communities to take action. Because local social and economic conditions contribute heavily to the dropout problem, the local citizenry and establishments must be involved to work with educators in providing better environments and opportunities for potential dropouts. Educators must be joined by all segments of the community in bringing to bear all possible resources in a concerted dropout prevention effort.

While the national message we deliver about the dropout crisis is the same across community lines, the approaches developed to address the problem locally will vary. We must recognize that each community has its own culture and traditions and that what works for one community may be entirely inappropriate for another.

What does remain constant from one community to the next is the need to empower the entire community to take action. We must mobilize to harness every individual's outrage and channel it toward the shared goal of educational success for every student.

We listened, and We heard. . .

- Advance political and social learning by demonstrating that there are multiple causes of crime, drug abuse, pollution, and dropping out of school
- Learn about the difficult, often ignored and avoided aspects of local reality—come to see that the problems originate within the community itself
- Involve others in making something work—breed empowerment
- Conduct a quality of life study in the community to pinpoint the impact of dropouts
- Present local demographics graphically—keep them as the focal point of discussion
- Find ways to empower communities to mobilize themselves, to understand the nature of the problem in their own context, to look at their own resources, their own styles, their own ethos, and tailor the action to what they think will work well in their own communities in solving the drop out problem

"People did not appreciate how significant the dropout problem really was. . .we had to relay the facts."
Larry E. Jenkins
Lockheed – Austin Division

"Outrage. . .may have to be outrageous."
Edward J. Meade, Jr.
The Ford Foundation

"The question is how to make communities as clearly aware of the risk of having dropouts as they are aware of the risk of drunk drivers on the road and toxic waste in the environment. . .even people who don't have children in school must see the issue as their responsibility."
Arlene Pavey
Teacher,
Garden Grove Unified School District

"Make the message so obvious that even organizations and institutions with no prior history of involvement with education cannot in good conscience ignore it"
Robert B. Schwartz
Office of the Governor,
State of Massachusetts

MOBILIZING THE INDIVIDUAL

MOBILIZING THE INDIVIDUAL

"If you are successful in mobilizing communities against the dropout problem, you will have achieved an historical step in community organization. You will have pioneered a new way of functioning for most communities."
John W. Gardner
Former Secretary, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare

"With every kid I've ever worked with, I've found there was a desire to learn; the reality is that all kids want to learn."
James Vasquez
Superintendent,
Edgewood School District
San Antonio, Texas

Commitment is the key to mobilization. There will be no community mobilization around dropout prevention issues unless individuals choose to become involved. They must be convinced that the dropout crisis is severe and that they must act. They must be shown what needs to be changed. They must become outraged at what will happen if nothing changes and given a vision of what might be possible. Then, the individuals must join with others in leading the community into action.

FOCUS THE ATTENTION: Create a Dream

Before we can mobilize people to act, there must be a vision of where the action will ultimately lead. We should know what we want to change and have a vision of a better future—a picture of success.

The picture must focus our attention on both a better American society and a better life for each individual. We must keep in mind that as we remove barriers to a student's educational success in our local community, we will also change society so that all young people have better opportunities to learn and achieve.

The complexity of our society may overwhelm us when we try to envision massive change in the foreseeable future. Thus, in creating the vision we must first identify the starting point—and most often the starting point is in the community itself. Each community has its own resources and its own impediments to change. The goals of the vision will be attainable when tailored to the reality of the individual community.

A clear vision encourages us to take the first step. We can then set intermediate goals and plan for small but important victories. These victories keep the momentum going and carry us toward the ultimate goal. The vision serves as a pole star to guide our efforts, and it attracts others to our mission.

We listened, and We heard. . .

- Act as a visionary who sees solutions and possibilities—show others where to begin looking
- Tailor the vision to the community ethos—don't use the same cookie cutter for every community's plan
- Help communities move from the current state of affairs to one that is better
- Base the vision on a belief system—such as—All kids can learn. Kids can take ownership and responsibility for their lives. High expectations are necessary for all kids. Respect the potential and power of kids.
- Help students to increase their self esteem and become productive members of society
- Make initial goals easy to achieve

"Hope is the first task of a leader."
John W. Gardner
Former Secretary, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare

". . .saw a crisis. . .used my leadership position to do something about it."
Mary Hatwood Futrell
National Education Association

"Leadership is helping communities learn their way from the current state of affairs to one that is better."
Henry M. Halsted
The Johnson Foundation

"Must mobilize grassroot leadership. . .there is no other choice. . .each community has its own culture."
John W. Gardner
Former Secretary, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare

EMPOWER OTHERS: Take a Leadership Role

Every mobilization effort needs effective leadership. Where this leadership comes from and what we expect it to do varies with the task and with the personalities involved.

The complexity of the dropout problem demands the involvement of numerous leaders from the community. Some will be immediately recognized because of their previous leadership experience, others will emerge based on the nature of the mobilization, and still others will be the unsung leaders—behind the scene—where the daily action is.

We cannot expect top leaders, working alone, to make the system work without the help of many others throughout the society. A great many individuals throughout the system must be in a state of psychological readiness to take the initiative, to take leaderlike action. . . .
John W. Gardner,
"The Nature of Leadership: Introductory Considerations," *Leadership Papers/1, p. 17.*

We need everyone to be ready to take hold and become "leaderlike" as the situation demands. Different situations require different leadership skills—negotiating,compromising, collaborating, persisting, persuading, motivating, trust building, and networking.

In looking for leaders for mobilization on the dropout issue, we must set high expectations for the breadth of their skills. Additionally, we must search for leaders who have a thorough understanding of the problem in its social and economic context, have a deep commitment to education, have experience with school programs, and represent minorities particularly hard hit by the dropout problem.

We should not expect to find leaders who can provide pat answers and packaged solutions. Instead, we should expect that the leaders will be visionary catalysts for action.

We listened, and We heard. . .

- Help others to work at producing solutions—break the tradition that only leaders can fix things
- Put people's problems back in their laps without abandoning them
- Frame the debate—help define the problem
- Educate the participants in the political, social, and economic context of the dropout problem
- Bring forth the issue that needs attention—have meaningful ideas about how to go about addressing it
- Hold the attention of constituents on a goal—help them on their way toward a goal
- Help other leaders set goals—let people know something is going to happen
- Tap the vitality of lower levels of management—which is where the leadership is closest to the action

- Influence others outside of personal jurisdictions—use the skills of persuasion and collabortion
- Access existing networks and "pull them into" the action
- Talk with special interest groups that are impacted
- Be inclusive not exclusive
- Constantly rethink groups that need to be mobilized
- Walk through the invisible barriers that divide communities, deal with people who are different—find what moves them and enlist them in the cause

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"Saying you want to be involved in education is wonderful. Deciding what you are willing to commit to is a totally different thing."
Larry E. Jenkins
Lockheed - Austin Division

"Mobilizing isn't a cosmic process. . .only a few people have the issue in their guts."
M. Hayes Mizell
South Carolina Employment Initiatives for Youth Demonstration Project

"You can't give off heat unless you're on fire."
The Reverend Jesse L. Jackson
Rainbow Coalition

COMMIT TO ACTION:
Give the Green Light

There is no precise formula for mobilization. It is an involved process that includes many different elements in varying combinations which change depending on the issue, the community, and the individuals involved. However, a logical beginning point is for an individual or an organization to determine its level of commitment and then acknowledge it has permission to move forward into action. This permission may come from a variety of sources.

One source is the self. We must believe we can make a difference. We must believe we are capable of carrying out the task at hand. We must know that our commitment is strong enough to weather the inevitable storms that come with trying to change the status quo. We must ask the quetions: "What can I do? How can I help make change occur?" and then, listen for the answer and take stock of the reply.

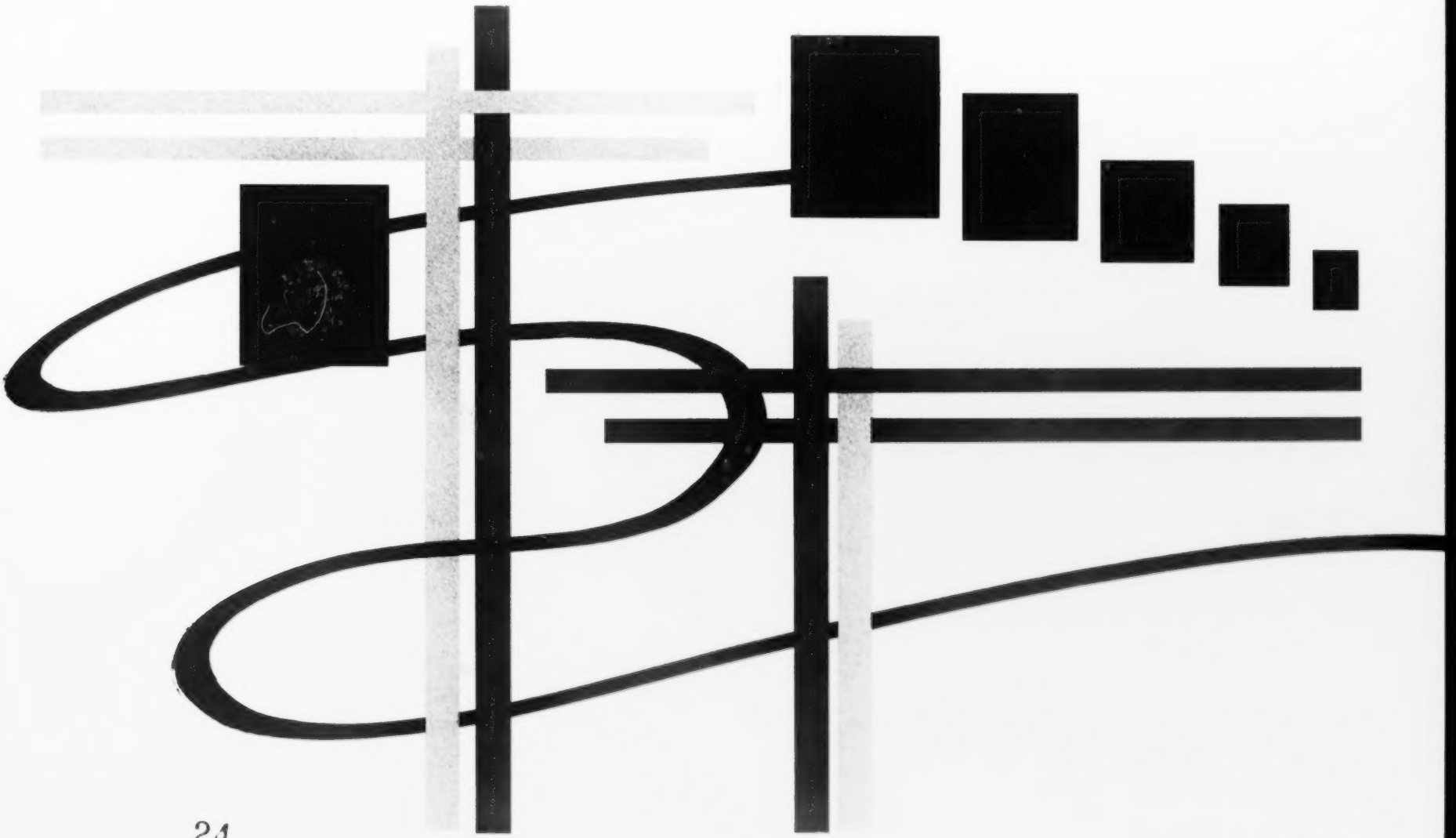
Once we acknowledge our own level of commitment, the extent of our personal resources, and the degree of involvement we desire, we can proceed in securing permission to act from other necessary sources. If we represent an organization, we need permission of the organization, either from the parent body or the local affiliate. Legitimacy may also come from our constituency in the form of a request to act, or it might come from our employer as an order to act.

It is important to grant permission to ourselves and recognize our responsibility to grant others permission to act. In working with others we set clear expectations and understand their needs for permission. Through our leadership policies and activities, we need to open doors to participation and challenge others to become involved. Whatever the source, permission is our springboard to action.

We listened, and We heard. . .

- Do a commitment check—be willing to risk
- Determine the selfish reason to invest in the cause
- Find a way to personally buy-in
- Stop worrying about being blamed—start acting
- Stop the feeling of powerlessness
- Give the signal that authorizes action—be the spark that lights the fires
- Look for the formal and informal signals that authorize action
- Guard against denying permission that's been granted—*"That's not our role." "We don't have time." "It isn't working." "The program is already set."*
- Give your membership permission to mobilize at the local level—set the expectation

MOBILIZING COALITIONS



MOBILIZING COALITIONS

". . . the amount of overlap of goals and support determines the degree of success."
Anne Lindeman
Former State Senator, Arizona

Individuals concerned about dropout prevention may feel like solitary voices in the wilderness if they try to go it alone. As coalitions are built with other individuals and organizations with overlapping missions, the separate voices can be joined together into a chorus that projects a message loud enough to be heard by everyone—the whole will be greater than the sum of the parts.

In order to build energy and target efforts toward mutually supportive goals, individuals must join together with other individuals and organizations must work with other organizations. Sometimes, new organizations must be created. All of these groups have their own priorities and agendas, but they also have reasons to work together. Often, representative members from organized groups need to come together to form a new coalition which adds legitimacy to the cause, removes duplication of effort, and creates a united front for maximum impact.

Coalition building requires targeting every individual and organization in the community for involvement and mobilization; no stone should be left unturned. We must include as many potential collaborators as possible and expand the circle of involvement through the use of multiple coalitions. This approach allows war on the dropout crisis to be waged on many fronts.

CULTIVATE THE OVERLAP: Manage the Coalitions

Effective coalitions do not magically appear; they are created by dedicated, committed, outraged individuals who are willing to take the lead and develop structures and processes to facilitate constructive action. Fully understanding the leadership characteristics of effective mobilizers and coalition builders takes some serious thought.

Frequently, a charismatic, impassioned leader steps forward in the early stages of a mobilization effort. This person acts as a magnetic force which draws in individuals or groups concerned about the issue. People rally behind this leader; but as the group gains legitimacy and momentum, it often needs to build coalitions with other groups and leaders to further its effort. Mistakes can be made at this stage if it is assumed that the charismatic, organizing leader will also be an effective coalition builder. A different leader in the group may have the best set of skills to lead the coalition building effort.

Another mistake can be made by assuming that the people closest to the problem have the most power to influence the needed changes. In fact, it might be the case that someone far removed from the immediate problem has the most power to lead the constituencies and effect major changes in the community.

Coalitions are powerful and can be difficult to manage. The challenge is to capitalize on the energy, drive, and excitement of

charged individuals and organizations. When successfully done, everyone gets back twice what they put into it; and this becomes part of what makes it fun for people to be involved.

Every member of a coalition brings to the effort a different constituency, different views on what needs to be done, varying levels of resources, different pressures, and different time commitments. The leaders of the coalition must understand where the goals of the different memberships overlap and cultivate the intersections.

Equally important is the leadership's understanding of the specialized expertise and parochial interests of the coalition members and their organizations. The coalition group may have great energy and be eager to move forward. However, if the leadership fails to recognize or decides to ignore the differences in established hierarchies, egos, and organizational priorities, the coalition will be incapacitated and its strength will wane. Turf battles among coalition members will then focus the coalition's energies internally upon itself, while the dropout crisis rages on unchecked.

We listened, and We heard. . .

- The dropout problem encompasses such a wide variety of social issues that it is impossible for any one organization to address the crisis alone
- We must stop the finger-pointing and join together in sharing the control, the blame, and the credit—we must build and mobilize coalitions for dropout prevention
- Leaders must search the community and discover who has demonstrated an interest in working on the dropout prevention issues
- Leaders must build one or more coalitions with those already involved with dropouts or dropout prevention;
- Coalition leaders must capitalize on existing formal or informal networks which could support the vision that all young people can learn
- Coalition leaders must identify other potential partners and reach out to them in such a way that they willingly join the effort.
- Relieve the heaviness of social change. . . make it fun for people to be involved

". . .they are waiting to be asked."
Betty Dwyer
Urban League of Rochester

"Don't just talk to your own folk."
Larry L. Farmer
Mississippi Action for Community Education

TARGET ALL STAKEHOLDERS: Expand the Dimensions

Everyone in the community has a stake in having the dropout rate reduced. However, many people fail to recognize that they actually are stakeholders; we must show them that they are—that the dropout problem impacts them and they have reasons to care about solving the problem.

Many stakeholders are already members of organizations. The leadership of the mobilization effort must identify the organized stakeholders who can have the most direct impact on dropout prevention and open lines of communication and cooperation with these groups. When the coalition finds that there are additional key stakeholders that are not organized, it must find ways to bring these people together so that they can function as a unit and add strength to the coalition.

The breadth of the coalition is critical. All of the concerned stakeholders must be involved. Doors to new constituencies need to be opened. Each coalition member brings a new perspective and additional resources to bear on the issue of providing education for all students. In order to grow and move forward, the coalition will use many of its members to translate the vision for the future and to educate new constituencies. One of the challenges for the leadership is to match the skills and talents of the coalition to the complex tasks at hand.

The fundamental power and vitality of a coalition comes from its breadth and ability to

capitalize on its strengths. Successful coalitions are constantly expanding their reach to include additional stakeholders. They effectively use the strengths of existing organizations, they build a broad-based constituency, and they serve as a focal point for energy and action.

We listened, and We heard. . .

- Collaborators are ready—at a loss at how to jump the hurdle and get involved with education—need to know how to proceed
- Build coalitions with adversaries
- Involve a lot of interpreters—different stakeholders talk different languages
- Know the nature of the stakeholder before going and asking for involvement
- Make sure the most effective spokesperson communicates to the appropriate group
- Be clear about what you are asking for . . . real deliverables of the stakeholders

STAKEHOLDERS CHECKLIST

Schools

- ☐ Students
- ☐ Parents
- ☐ Educators
  - Teachers
  - Student Teachers
  - Administrators
  - Researchers
  - Counselors
- ☐ School Board
- ☐ Taxpayers
- ☐ Professional Organizations
- ☐ Higher Education Institutions
- ☐ Ad Hoc Committees, Task Forces, Commission Members
- ☐ Others Working In Schools: (Nurses, Custodians and Maintenance Workers, Attendance Officers, Secretaries, Bookkeepers)
- ☐ _____

Business and Industry

- ☐ Large Companies
- ☐ Medium Companies
- ☐ Small Businesses
- ☐ Business Councils/Organizations
- ☐ Labor Councils/Organizations
- ☐ _____

Organizations/Associations

- ☐ Community Based Organizations
- ☐ Grassroots, Special Issue Organizations
- ☐ Political Organizations
- ☐ Private Organizations
- ☐ Professional Organizations
- ☐ Religious Organizations
- ☐ Service Organizations
- ☐ Special Interest Groups
- ☐ _____

Politicians and Elected Officials

- ☐ Elected Local Officials
- ☐ Elected State Officials
- ☐ Local, State and National Political Candidates
- ☐ Local, State and National Policy Makers
- ☐ _____

Public Agencies

- ☐ Education
- ☐ Employment and Training
- ☐ Health
- ☐ Mental Health
- ☐ Social Service
- ☐ Substance Abuse
- ☐ Judicial/Corrections
- ☐ Welfare
- ☐ _____

Pivotal People/Individual

- ☐ Community Activists
- ☐ Respected Members of Community (Elders)
- ☐ Philanthropists
- ☐ Business and Labor Leaders
- ☐ Religious Leaders
- ☐ Local Heroes
- ☐ Student Leaders
- ☐ Street Leaders
- ☐ _____

"Do an analysis of how the business can help . . .make it tangible. . .explain who will be helped and how they can be helped. . .relate it to the nature of the business."
Toni Fay
Time Inc.

"Can't nickel and dime it. . .be blatent in asking for the big dollars."
Peggy Funkhouser
Los Angeles Educational Partnership

COURT THE INVESTORS: Find the Resources

The good news is—every stakeholder is a potential investor.

The bad news is—we could get overwhelmed, lost, or disoriented because of the lack of boundaries and vastness of the playing field.

As mobilizers we need a plan that determines how to effectively approach the numerous investors. We need to categorize the stakeholders in terms of their potential investment—time, money, resources. Then we need to choose the best spokesperson to talk with the investor—someone who speaks the investor's language and can translate the investor's response. The request to the investor must show the relationship between the local community change that is needed and the self interests of the investor.

The investors are there. If the call is clear, if there is a plan, if the messengers are appropriate and if the request relates to the investor's self interest or philanthropic nature, then there will be an investment of time, money or resources.

INVESTOR MATRIX

Investment \ Investors	School	Business	Organizations	Public Agencies	Foundations	Individuals
Ideas						
Time						
Expertise						
Facilities						
Materials						
Equipment						
Money						

We listened, and We heard. . .

- Describe the request in terms of the expertise, talents, skills, and products of the investor
- Sometimes start with a small request of involvement and later increase the request as the investor's understanding of what's at stake increases
- Go straight to the top to ask for an investment
- Enlist major corporations. . .don't let them buy off cheaply
- Involve foundations in asking other foundations to join the effort
- Lobby for governmental funding
- Notice that many are tired of giving in the traditional ways—people for special events, furniture, printing a ticket, etc.—they need more substantial involvement

"Human resources are seen as a cost to companies. . .human resources have been plentiful. . .they aren't now, and won't be in the future. . .the business community must help in the development of the human resources of our country."
Fred Frederick
National Alliance of Business

"Sell your effectiveness. . .form coalitons. . .network at local, state and national levels. . .go for simple objectives. . .keep the media on the topic."
Micky Sadoff
Mothers Against Drunk Driving

"Everyone must join hands around the school; that is the secret to successful schools."
James B. Hunt
Former Governor, North Carolina

ACTIVATE THE COALITIONS: Move Forward Together

As coalitions begin to increase their membership and influence, the stakeholders will be ready to move forward and jump hurdles, but they need direction on how to proceed. Since there is no single formula for success, coalitions must employ multiple strategies to activate and coordinate the stakeholders as coalition participants. As the various strategies are implemented, energy will build and coalition influence and impact will continue to spread and strengthen.

STRATEGY #1: Match the Messenger to the Stakeholder

The messenger must use language appropriate to the audience. For instance, the business community wants the request for involvement to be described in terms of return on investment, bottomline, relationship to enlightened responsibility, impact over time to the region and community, employer benefits (skilled workforce), change in the marketplace, relationship to future customers, increased employee pool, the marketing strategy of coalition and what is being asked of the company in terms of expertise, access and financial support.

Audience	Messengers
Dropouts	Other Dropouts, Disc Jockeys, Athletes
Business	Other Business Leaders
Politicians/ Community Leaders	Business, Religious, Political Leaders
Educators	Public, Professional Leaders
Organizations	Parent Organization, Organization Members, Members of Similar Organizations

STRATEGY #2: Develop Networks

- Establish links with local, state and national organizations invested in dropout prevention or experienced with community mobilizing
- Encourage role groups and peers to talk with each other about dropout prevention possibilities and activities

STRATEGY #3: Get on Other Peoples' Agendas

- Call for a personal meeting
- Arrange to make speech at annual convention
- Create an issue focus group
- Become a member of an advisory group, task force, or commission

STRATEGY #4:
Piggyback on Others' Platforms

- Use an existing group's priority on the issue to encourage others to buy-in
- Use another leader's platform as a springboard for a similar constituency

STRATEGY #5:
Use Existing Structures

- Find a group which was formed to do something collaboratively, but their mission is completed or almost completed. Look for ways to link them to the dropout prevention agenda.
- Tap the decision-making process of collaborator organizations—resolutions, votes for support, assignment of monies to programs
- Involve collaborator public relations departments in creating news releases, media events within their own organization and for the coalition
- Look for regularly held meetings, retreats, forums and annual events where mobilizing can occur
- Find groups which meet periodically on education related issues. Do research on their interests and their leadership commitment and propose something to one of their leaders. Let this person then gain the cooperation of the others since they know best how to work the network.

STRATEGY #6:
Create New Structures

- Establish an Office of Dropout Prevention in the Governor's Office, Mayor's Office, Superintendent's Office
- Create state-wide blue ribbon commissions, task forces, advisory committees
- Create community-wide blue ribbon commissions, task forces, advisory committees
- Charge a top level interagency group to remove barriers to providing education for at-risk youth and dropouts

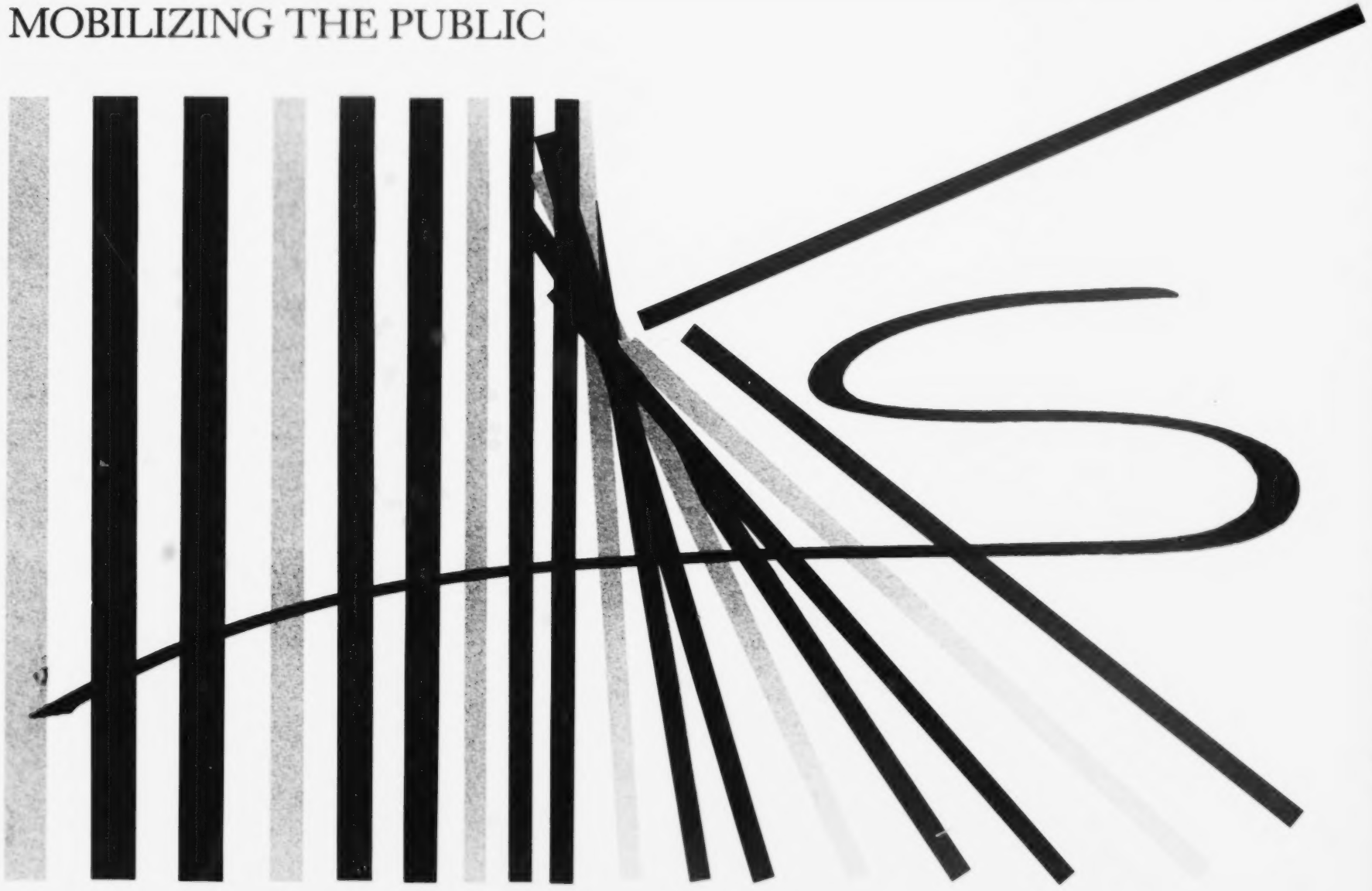
STRATEGY #7:
Go for Power Hitters

- Get the top office holder to authorize action—Mayor, Governor, Chief Executive Officer, Executive Director, Principal, Superintendent, Chair of School Board. . .
- Move senior management to promote dropout prevention activities as a priority for staff
- Get the first team at decision meetings
- Use the bully pulpit of the Governor's office—inaugural address, state of state message, speeches, presentation of the budget, development of legislation, interviews with the media
- Get local community leaders to step forward saying they have resources to offer and others should join them

STRATEGY #8:
Defuse the Opposition

- Find the sharks—listen—look for areas of agreement—discover some activity of joint involvement which could be gathering data about the disagreement
- Bring the adversary to the table—at every conference or meeting involve the adversary. . .this is the person or group we have to change. . .opposing views are needed to shape the debate

MOBILIZING THE PUBLIC



MOBILIZING THE PUBLIC

Without broad-based public support and involvement, mobilization stops short of being a real community-wide effort and loses the energy required for its success. We must make the public understand that the dropout crisis is everyone's problem, show the real effect it has, and develop the outrage that promotes involvement.

We must help the public articulate its outrage and provide a way to harness and direct that energy by introducing its members to the many activities of the coalitions or by encouraging them to create their own mechanism for involvement.

Mobilizing the public requires a massive public relations campaign using as many approaches as possible to get attention, to achieve public ownership of the problem, and to move into action.

"Let the public know that dropping out can be prevented."
M. Hayes Mizell
South Carolina Employment Initiatives for Youth Demonstration Project

"Effective mobilizing within a community occurs often best when people are directly threatened . . . need to help people see that the dropout problem is a . . . tangible threat to the quality of their lives."
Jon Blyth
Charles Stewart Mott Foundation

WRITE THE HEADLINE: Get the Attention

How can we best convey our message so that the public will buy into the issue and get involved in working on the solution? We must begin by knowing our audience. What is its understanding of the problem? What is the capacity for involvement? Why would it want to be involved? How will it benefit?

Messages about the crisis need to be aimed at individual needs. But these needs are varied. For some the appeal is to reduce the personal threat they feel from those who have so little to lose. For others, it is the mission of a better and more equitable society. While for still others, it is the attraction of being involved, of being part of something bigger than themselves, of experiencing the excitement of social change, of the happy camaraderie that is shared by those who are in something together.

We listened, and We heard. . .

1. **Altruistic Motivation**
   - Join in—change something for the common good of the community
   - Waste not, want not—our society's human capital is going to waste
   - Invest now—intervene and improve the setting—costs less than paying the social costs over the lifetime of the dropout
   - Help—something can be done
   - Involve yourself—it's socially unacceptable not to be involved in dropout prevention
   - Express feelings—act with compassion
   - Appreciate the importance—education is important to just about everything we are trying to build in the country, the state, and our community
2. **Self Protection Needs**
   - Appeal to people's fears that their quality of life is threatened
   - Focus on how the quality of life of the aging population is jeopardized when the next generation does not have the skills to support it
   - Demonstrate the seriousness of the situation using scare tactics, horror stories, shame, harassment, and threats
3. **Personal Enjoyment Needs**
   - Join the effort—there is something in it for you—people
   - Make new friends—develop a camaraderie with new people with similar interests
   - Feel a sense of community rather than boredom or isolation

"What works are anecdotes and real stories that move people and touch people."
Joel Ario
Wisconsin Public Interest Research Group

"To get the message across. . . beam out on the frequency people are listening to."
Debra DeLee
National Education Association

TRANSMIT A CLEAR SIGNAL: Get A Frequency Match

The vision of what's possible must be clearly presented to the public. The message must be as simple and succinct as possible so that everyone can understand it easily. It must be stated with the passion and experience of real life through hard-hitting anecdotes, testimonials, and shocking stories that touch the hearts of people.

We must carefully choose the messengers of our vision and cause. The stronger the belief and commitment of the messenger to the dropout prevention issue, the further the message will be carried. Whether the message is delivered at the national, state, or local level the best messenger might be a teacher, a dropout from the community, a parent, a well-known citizen, a corporate executive, a sports figure, a famous writer, a politician, a religious leader, a television or movie star, an organization leader, or a potential dropout.

We listened, and We heard. . .

- Frame the message in simple terms
- Tailor the message for the different constituencies
- Change the message if the listener is not listening
- Set an agenda people can act on
- Communicate a sense of urgency
- Release different levels of detail at varying time intervals
- Capture the essence of case studies, statistics, actual events which support dropout prevention efforts
- Capture the essence in 30 or 60 second media bits
- Find as many voices as possible

SELECT THE RIGHT CHANNELS: Choose the Medium

In addition to getting the attention of the audience, tailoring the message, identifying the messengers, and creating a clear signal, the dropout prevention effort needs to consider which communications medium is most appropriate for delivering the message. Most public issue campaigns tend to approach this decision by thinking about three mediums—print, electronic, and face-to-face or a combination of all three.

1. **Print–Mass Media**
   - Media Releases
   - Letters to Editors
   - Editorials
   - Newsletters
   - Op Ed Pieces
   - News Articles
   - Feature Articles
   - Flyers

   Print–Promotional Materials
   - Advertisements
   - Billboards

- Bumper Stickers
- Buttons
- Balloons
- Posters
- Tee Shirts
- Certificates

2. Electronic Communications

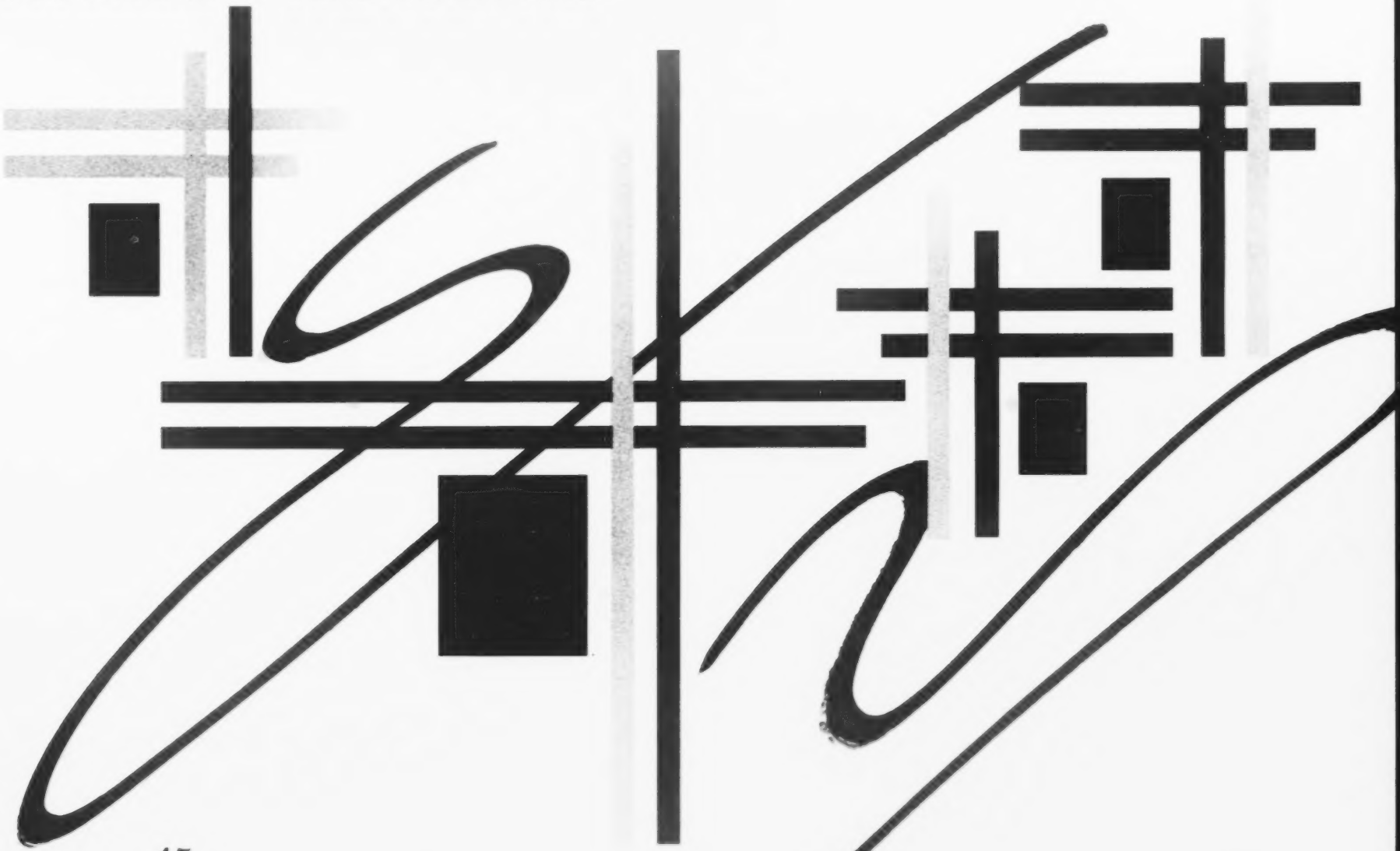
- Phone Conversations
- Radio and Television Public Service Announcements
- Radio and Television Talk Shows
- Radio and Television Documentaries
- Electronic Bulletin Boards
- Protest Songs
- Tele and Video Conferences
- Soap Operas

3. Face-to-Face Communication

- Speeches
- Canvassing
- Debates
- Forums, Seminars
- Public Hearings
- Demonstrations
- Meetings
- Neighborhood Gatherings

"Empower all of us to understand the seriousness of the issue."
Edward J. Meade, Jr.
The Ford Foundation

MOBILIZING THE AGENCIES



MOBILIZING THE AGENCIES

The way our citizens live their lives has been dramatically altered by technological advances and massive changes in the economic and social conditions in our country.

The agencies established during the first 200 years of our nation's history served well the society we once were. Now, however, changes in our society are playing havoc with the agencies which deliver services to our people.

It is time to consider how our agencies can change to help fulfill our vision of educating all of society. They have established bureaucracies that have had clear directions for providing services. They are now faced with having to acknowledge that an enormous segment of the population is not being served. This segment is not being educated, lacks economic opportunities, and is not receiving many needed social services.

Change does not come easily—it demands taking risks, dealing with ambiguity, learning from failures and successes, involving new people, creating new ways of doing things, shifting attitudes, training and retraining, and developing new ways to monitor the effectiveness of the delivery of service. Additionally, demographic shifts indicate that we need to dramatically increase the number of minority staff at all levels in our agencies. Local, state, and national agencies must reflect the composition of our population and manifest our participatory values.

Changing the culture of agencies is difficult, but it must be done if they are to be viable. The agencies cannot do it alone; individuals and organizations must step forward and support them as they change their direction, restructure the bureaucracies, and alter their attitudes toward their clients.

Everyone must work to ensure that all agencies are meeting the changing needs of society—it cannot be "*business as usual.*"

"We have to stop being too professional and credentialized as we go about thinking about mobilizing communities to deal with at-risk youth issues."
Jon Blyth
Charles Stewart Mott Foundation

ALTER THE ETHOS:
Change the Attitudes

Altering the ways people in agencies relate to the client is necessary. We all must once again believe that everyone can learn and be educated—that we can help them. We must demonstrate that we care.

When our clients are not learning or when they reject our services, we need to listen and remember that we are there to serve our clients. We must demonstrate an openness to change the delivery system when the statistics and client voices loudly and clearly say that the agency is failing. It is important that we not ignore, but instead be sensitive to, the dropouts' and the community's perceptions of what is needed to make the delivery of services more appropriate.

Often we find our agencies have put up walls to keep others out. We have constructed environments that are intimidating. We use a professional language which sends a "better than thou" attitude, and we make the clients come to us rather than reaching into their environment. We flaunt our credentials. We act as if we know the answer before we hear the problem. Our agencies have created so many paper hoops to jump through that we never engage with the client.

Opening channels of communication with the segments of our population that we are failing to serve should be every agency's responsibility. We must honestly express an attitude which demonstrates our desire to

educate all people of this society and convinces our clients and the nation that we will move heaven and earth to accomplish this goal and make our vision come to life.

We listened, and We heard. . .

- Drop the organizational vanity
- Know that the world does not begin and end with the agencies
- Educate—don't become judges
- Believe they too can learn
- Become less defensive on numbers of dropouts and use the numbers to focus positive action on the changes needed
- Understand you don't have to go it alone—involve other agencies and community expertise—the problems are complex
- Bring the human touch back to our agencies
- Dare to care
- Understand that human resource development is the name of the game
- Display an attitude that conveys the seriousness of the problem
- Fight against economic, racial, sexual, and ethnicity biases
- Radiate an attitude of a belief in the future for the disadvantaged
- Tell the client that "We need you, the community needs you, and our agency will help you"
- Let there be more than one way to do things
- Force a sifting of alternative ways to do things
- Move decision-making as close to the action with the student as possible so genuine engagement can occur
- Rethink traditions—determine if they have outlived their effectiveness

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". . .it has to do with political support for the schools. . . .A key motivation is to find a new constituency for public education."
Robert B. Schwartz
Office of the Governor,
State of Massachusetts

SHAPE THE ACTION:
Restructure the System

Our educational system is complex, involving local, state, and national government agencies in the delivery of services. Mobilizers must be cognizant of how each agency must adapt to the new educational demands and tailor strategies to each type of agency.

Successful mobilizing efforts include consideration of an agency's characteristics and structures, as well as its constraints and limitations. Each agency is embedded in a political system; each gets its funding approved from elected officials and has a different management structure, a different role in delivering services, method of involving the client, and decision-making structure. Each has its own culture and agenda. We must change these cultures and agendas to meet the needs of the country for an educated populace. The game cannot be played by the old rules.

We listened, and We heard. . .

Use Political Channels

The highest public office at the local, state, and national levels can be used effectively to mobilize action with the public, other elected officials, agencies and influential individuals. Some of the ways to tap power and leadership of these visible offices is to have the chief executive:

- Establish an Office of Dropout Prevention

- Call a meeting of interagency senior staff to remove barriers, coordinate funding cycles, reduce duplication of information requested, provide parallel funding
- Fund pilot dropout programs in multiple locations
- Fund research on effective dropout programs and dropout demographics—report results in economic terms for business and political community
- Sponsor statewide meetings to raise the awareness level of the general public
- Co-sponsor a dropout prevention forum with the legislative education committee leadership
- Write letters to business and community leaders requesting them to join in volunteering to work in and with the schools
- Highlight the severity of the dropout problem and its link to the future of the society in all speeches
- Support a legislative package which provides for a comprehensive dropout prevention program statewide
- Establish dropout prevention advisory councils, blue ribbon panels or commissions
- Form an interagency planning group, including social service agency units—health, welfare, recreation, mental health, substance abuse, law enforcement, employment, and training

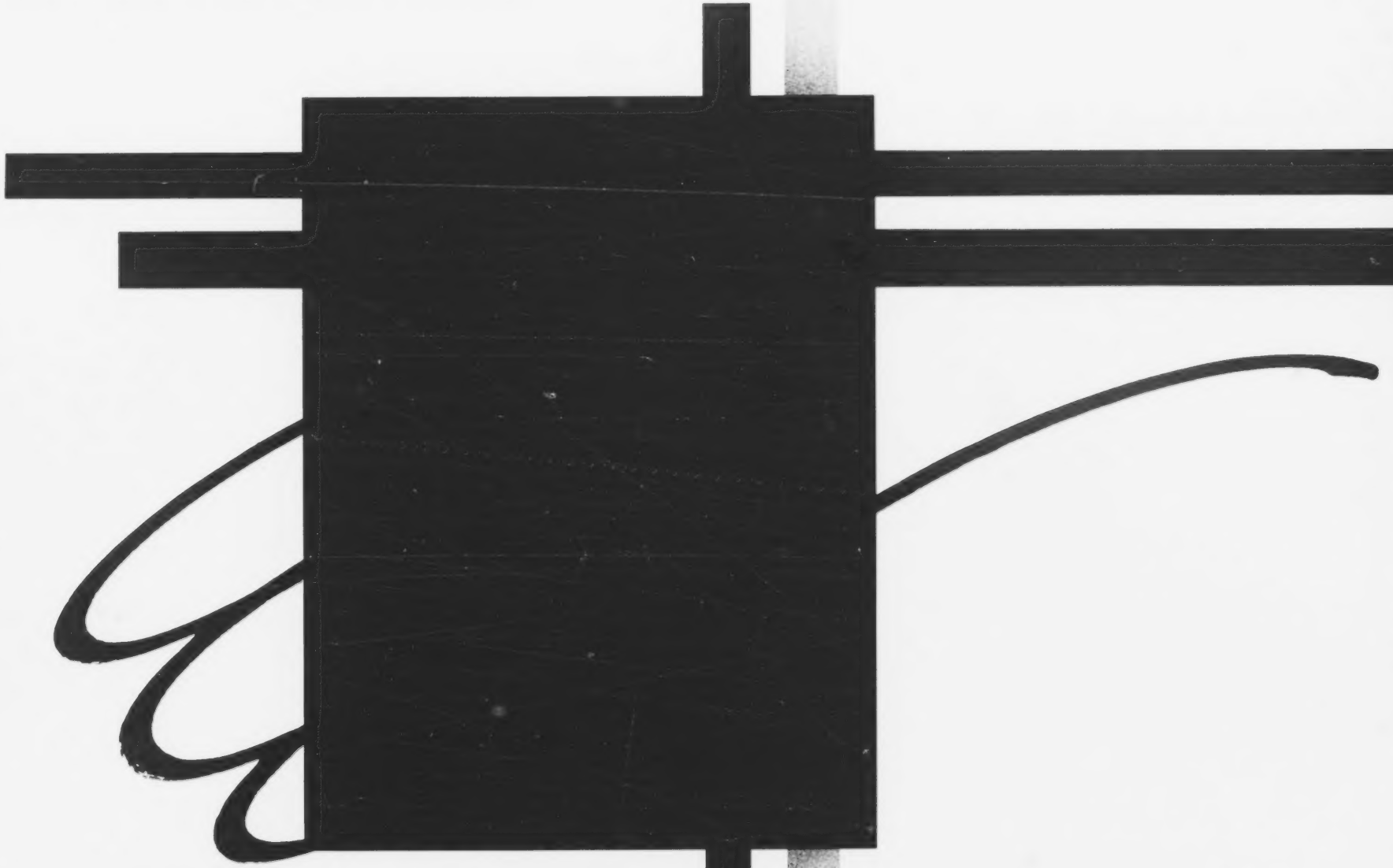
Use Legislative Processes

- Hold public hearings on various aspects of dropout prevention
- Support research on severity of problem, which groups are most affected, what needs to be done, what's been successfully done in other places
- Pass laws requiring specific data collection, attention to targeted populations, specific programs
- Appropriate maximum funds

Use Administrative Authority

- Call meetings of senior staff to establish dropout prevention activities as a priority, request plans of action for the coming year
- Break the education service unit into smaller sizes—a large high school into four smaller units for accountability, flexibility, and increased speed of information flow
- Bring agency staff into contact with other professionals outside the agency
- Bring the business community, local, state, and national agencies into the schools to share their expertise in conducting staff development sessions, creating marketing plans for dropout prevention programs, conducting community-wide research on education needs of the community
- Send agency staff to professional conferences where the agenda is focused on state of the art activity and hope that the peer pressure of increasing professional knowledge and skills occurs
- Reduce, reduce, reduce paperwork requirements so that staff will no longer have this as a reason not to act on solving the dropout prevention problem
- Establish dropout prevention boards and coordinators at the school, district, community, state, and national levels
- Create a system so that when a student drops out of school the employment and training unit is alerted along with other social service agencies
- Create a communication system which keeps all professionals involved with the potential dropout alerted to possible problems, crises, shifts in the status quo
- Give administrative recognition to agency staff who more effectively deliver educational services to the high-risk groups
- Add large numbers of minority professionals and support staff in all areas of employment
- Retrain staff, focusing on blending social service staff and education staff; cross the turf lines; demand new skills, behaviors, attitudes, policies, and procedures.
- Ensure regular media recognition of successful dropout prevention efforts

ACTING ON THE VISION



ACTING ON THE VISION

"Perceive the problem. . . energize the people. . .act. . .provide that what you are doing is making a difference."
Stephanie G. Robinson
National Urban League, Inc.

". . .move forward on dropout prevention. . . raise questions, share expertise. . .generate strategies. . .get the action plan started."
Donna C. Rhodes
National Foundation for the Improvement of Education

With the long range vision established, potential coalitions identified, the nucleus coalition created, and the decision to act made, mobilizers are ready to determine the form which their actions will take to reduce the dropout rate.

The choices of the mobilizer are similar to those of a traveler. When planning a trip a destination must be chosen, the mode of transportation determined, the itinerary planned, and the expenses covered. There are many decisions to be made and each interacts with the other. Many of these decisions are changed after the trip begins because of new information, bad weather, road blocks, vehicle breakdowns, driver fatigue, or curiosity. The lasting joy of the trip is the total experience, not just the pleasant events along the way.

Mobilizers must choose their destination and make their own travel plans. In doing this, they can consider successful journeys by other experienced mobilizers of dropout prevention efforts. Mobilizers need to consider what others have rejected, failed at, and altered in their dropout prevention travels.

CHOOSE A DESTINATION: Pinpoint the Goals

With so many choices, the decision of what the mobilization effort will do is no easy task. A mutual agreement must be reached on what is going to be done, what the goals of the mobilizers are, and how the goals of the various members of the coalition complement each other. There are many considerations to be made in determining the immediate, mid-range, and long-range goals. In addressing the global issues, you must go for increments of change in areas where your goals are attainable and your resources are available.

- Do you want to establish a program?
- Do you want to change an existing program?
- Do you want to change policies?
- Do you want to increase public awareness?
- Do you want to collect data on dropouts?
- Do you want to reduce the dropout rate by "X" percent?
- Do you want to change public mandates?
- Do you want to seek support from investors?
- Do you want to make institutional changes?
- Do you want to provide recognition for achievement?
- Do you want to provide recognition for attendance?
- Do you want to influence legislation?
- Do you want to educate elected officials?
- Do you want to start with a small effort or a large effort?
- Who do you want to be the beneficiaries of the effort?

CHECK THE CAUTIONS, YIELDS, DETOURS: Heed the Warnings

- Check what has not worked before
- Check the constraints on achieving your objective
- Watch out for language differences
- Consider the political ramifications
- Modify your direction when there are more stops than goes
- Monitor the changing needs of the coalition
- Yield, but don't stop
- Let some get off at the early stops
- Be careful to send the message you mean to send
- Start the program with staff who can pull it off
- Beware of human and financial undercapitalization
- Slow down and observe the psychological state of the audience
- Yield the education effort when survival needs erupt
- Watch the speed limit

CHART THE COURSE: Look at Options

The itinerary needs to be developed early even though it may be altered along the way. Every mobilizer has many routes to choose from, many strategies for accomplishing the goals. One of the strengths of working with coalitions is that they allow for many routes to be taken simultaneously. Mobilizers can use the experiences of those who have traveled these routes in mobilizing around other social, political, economic, and educational issues and can choose various routes.

1. **Events Route**
   - Community-wide conferences
   - Issue focus groups
   - School-based special events with community/business leaders
   - Retreats
   - Regional training teleconferences
   - Annual conferences
   - Career day counselling sessions
   - Summer catch-up sessions
   - Specially proclaimed days
2. **Funding Route**
   - Set up dues system
   - Solicit material goods
   - Give grants to educators
   - Establish a public education fund
   - Obtain corporate contributions
   - Access public agency funds
   - Garner federal, state, and local government funds
   - Obtain organization membership dues
   - Find the volunteers
   - Get money from bequests
3. **Legal Route**
   - Sign contracts with parents and students
   - Monitor court decisions
   - Initiate a legal challenge
   - Request an executive order
   - Initiate and get legislation passed
4. **Peer Support Route**
   - Develop peer counselling programs and victim assistance
   - Set up experiences for dropouts to learn from each other
5. **Policies/Procedures Route**
   - Require that applications for funding include target dropout prevention strategies
   - Establish policies that have the community and school district to set numerical or percentage targets for dropout reduction
   - Improve the data collection and reporting procedures of dropout statistics
   - Establish a policy announcing annual dropout results
   - Create a policy supporting independent monitoring by community groups
   - Establish a policy that says the school's dropout rate will be one of the performance criteria by which schools are evaluated
   - Develop a policy that all dropout prevention programs must involve collaboration by the education and social service agencies

- Establish a policy that students can not be permanently expelled (except for criminal act) without the school system certifying that the student is enrolling in a program outside the school system that will provide education, job training, apprenticeship, or community service
- Establish a policy that by the tenth grade every student must be enrolled in a clearly defined, appropriate curriculum designed to prepare the student for entry into a post-secondary institution, employment, military service, or community service.
- Provide teachers and administrators with lists of potential dropouts—daily, weekly, monthly, yearly—as a constant reminder

6. Political Route

- Initiate resolution
- Send memorandum to power hitter
- Identify dropout research needed by elected officials
- Obtain signatures on petitions
- Lead demonstrations
- Hold rallies
- Lobby the politicians

7. Program Route

- Develop programs designed to target potential dropouts
- Reform the curriculum with particular attention to the needs of the low-achieving, alienated students
- Match students and speed of learning—create individualized programs
- Push for comprehensive compensatory education programs for ALL students who need them
- Develop special programs to meet education and job training needs of teenage parents; provide them with child care at the school site
- Establish a community-based school survival clinic designed to serve potential dropouts by providing, as needed, individual and group counselling, linkage to social services, strategies in test taking skills, places for quiet study with tutorial assistance, computer assisted basic skills instruction, linkage to youth activities
- Create mentor programs—parents, community volunteers, business leaders, elected officials, college students
- Tailor your own program to fit the need
- Guarantee jobs, summer employment
- Adopt-a-school, Adopt-a-classroom, Adopt-a-kid
- Conduct student seminars at local businesses or community offices
- Provide summer learning academy experiences
- Intervene with early childhood programs
- Create alternative learning environments

8. Recognition/Incentives Route

- Reward schools that initiate dropout prevention programs
- Reward schools that significantly reduce their dropout rates over time
- Provide teacher/faculty scholarships
- Provide students with awards, letter sweaters, student scholarships, and special trips

9. Special Populations Route

- Use special population adults as role models in delivering programs—bring them in from the community
- Provide business counselling programs
- Develop programs targeting skills for priority job markets
- Create proactive hiring procedures and programs

IN THE LONG RUN

SUSTAIN THE EFFORT: Keep the Energy Flowing

We know the problems are myriad. We know the solutions are difficult to generate. We know the struggle is long and hard, but we must sustain the effort. We can do this if we keep our vision clear, rejoice in our successes along the way, and communicate our progress.

We know we want an educated citizenry. We want a nation that prizes education to the degree that even a small number of dropouts is unacceptable. We know what we have to do—we have to restructure our educational system and restructure the delivery of our social services—we have to change the expectations of the public and meet the needs of students.

In shaping our vision and objectives for the future, we know that attention must be given to developing strategies focused on how to sustain the mobilization efforts over time. We must become skilled at anticipating possible barriers or crises which will deter us from moving forward. Mobilization is a change process, and it is important for us to recognize that we are part of the change. Our plans of action must be dynamic and must anticipate reactions when changes begin to happen.

Because any dropout prevention effort is a long-term effort, we need to be able to stop along the way and take stock of our successes. We need to know that we are making a difference. Success with small increments of change will generate a sense of joy for mobilizers and galvanize the efforts toward the long-range vision.

The energy of the mobilization effort will be sustained when resources pour in to meet the needs of the students, when the public perceives change and offers its support, and when more students are getting an education.

As we start the next two hundred years of our country let us work to make the goal of an educated citizenry as enduring as the principles upon which our country is founded.

"If just one child is lost in the dropout crisis, that is one child too many."
Mary Hatwood Futrell
National Education Association

"An easily identifiable issue is the need. . .we don't have a singular issue or a singular answer. . .it's a long term effort with long term solutions."
Sandra Kessler Hamburg
Committee for Economic Development

"We must keep our eyes on the finish line and our minds on the race."
Carole J. Bialek
National Foundation for the Improvement of Education

"The road is relentless, tireless; and it requires uncompromising commitment to education."
Henry G. Cisneros
Mayor of San Antonio, Texas

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Putting ink to paper to describe a dynamic experience by its very nature flattens the experience and robs it of its energy. Acknowledging the work of the many people and organizations that contributed to this conference suffers from that effect. The names themselves cannot convey the energy, the commitment, the givingness of the people themselves; however, it is the closest we can come to expressing our gratitude, our respect, and our delight in the work in which we all engaged. In that spirit we acknowledge:

- The Johnson Foundation for recognizing and supporting the need to focus on mobilization for dropout prevention—Henry Halstead, Kay Mauer, Susan Poulsen Krogh, and William Boyd
- The NEA for advancing dropout prevention as a national priority
- The NFIE Board of Directors for its commitment to working with other organizations on dropout prevention
- The NFIE governance who actively participated in the conference—Terry Herndon, Arlene Pavey, Mary Hatwood Futrell, and Don Cameron
- The NEA governance and staff who contributed to the dialogue of the conference—Robert Chase, Gary Watts, Ruby King-Williams, and Debra DeLee
- The representatives of national foundations—Jon Blyth (Charles Stewart Mott), Bernard L. Charles (Carnegie), Edward J. Meade, Jr. (Ford)
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". . .there are no simple answers to the dropout. Educators, business leaders, community organizations, foundations, and government must all become informed about the dropout problem and work together to build community environments in which at-risk students will come to value themselves and become productive members of society."
Henry M. Halsted
The Johnson Foundation

"There are many starting points. . .choose one. . .become a part of the solution."
Donna C. Rhodes
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